

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 193313

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 380 - AUGUST 15, 1977

MOSCOW, KUWAIT, SANA FOR AMBASSADORS

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. ME PEACE. THE ARABS' REACTION TO WHAT THEY CONSIDER
ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE IS HARDENING. THE FEELING THAT
THEY HAVE BEEN TOO FLEXIBLE APPEARS TO BE GAINING
GROUND. HARSH CRIES OF DISSATISFACTION AND DOOM HAVE
BEEN HEARD FROM THE PALESTINIANS, LIBYANS, AND OTHERS.
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2. MORE NOTEWORTHY IS THE PUBLIC HARDENING OF STATEMENTS
BY THE MODERATE ARAB LEADERS. ASSAD SAID THAT
DAMASCUS HAD RULED OUT ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT MEETING

BETWEEN THE ISRAELI AND THE SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS.
MOREOVER, ASSAD OBSERVED THAT NO ONE HAS ASKED THE

SYRIANS TO HOLD SUCH MEETINGS. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS USUALLY MEET WITH THE US SECRETARY OF STATE DURING THE UN SESSION.

3. MANY ARABIC NEWSPAPERS HAVE STRESSED THAT THE ARABS MUST COMBINE FORCES IN THE FACE OF ISRAELI OBSTINACY. WITH AN OBVIOUS EYE ON SADAT, WHO IS SUSPECTED BY THE SYRIANS OF BEING WILLING TO ACCEPT A UNILATERAL EGYPTIAN SOLUTION, ASSAD STRESSED THAT CAIRO AND DAMASCUS WERE IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT. HE STATED THAT NEITHER WILL RELINQUISH AN INCH OF TERRITORY OCCUPIED IN 1967 OR BARGAIN OVER THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS.

4. SADAT, ALTHOUGH NOTING HE WAS STILL OPTIMISTIC, ALSO HAS ASSUMED A HARDER PUBLIC STANCE. "AL-AHRAM" QUOTED HIM AS SAYING THAT EGYPT REFUSES TO MAKE ANY CONCESSIONS IN VIEW OF THE HARDLINE THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE ADOPTED. ANOTHER HIGH EGYPTIAN OFFICIAL SAID THAT EGYPT WOULD NOT TOLERATE A CONTINUING "NO PEACE, NO WAR" SITUATION. THE OFFICIAL REITERATED SADAT'S PREVIOUS REMINDER THAT "SINAI II EXPIRES IN OCTOBER 1978." IF NO SETTLEMENT WERE REACHED, HE WARNED, "EGYPT WILL BE FREE TO ADOPT A POSITION THAT SERVES ITS OWN INTERESTS." HE SAID THAT SECRETARY VANCE RETURNED FROM HIS TRIP WITH THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT ISRAEL DOES NOT WANT TO CHANGE.
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5. THE EGYPTIANS, NEVERTHELESS, CONTINUE TO DESCRIBE RELATIONS WITH THE US IN POSITIVE TERMS. A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL, FOR EXAMPLE, STATED THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND CAIRO ARE PROCEEDING FROM GOOD TO BETTER. EMBASSY CAIRO OBSERVED THAT LOCAL PRESS TREATMENT AND PRIVATE COMMENTS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT INDICATE THAT EGYPTIAN LEADERS SINCERELY BELIEVE IT WAS POSITIVE FOR SEVERAL REASONS.

(A) ISRAELI "INTRANSIGENCE" IS NOW OUT IN THE OPEN FOR THE WORLD TO SEE;

(B) US POSITIONS ARE BECOMING CLEAR, AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE US IS FACING UP TO THE ISRAELIS;

(C) THE PROSPECT OF A US-PLO DIALOGUE HAS ARISEN;
AND

(D) ARABS HAVE ADOPTED RELATIVELY UNIFIED POSITIONS AND HAVE DEMONSTRATED FLEXIBILITY. (CONFIDENTIAL)

6. ISRAEL. THERE ARE FURTHER INDICATIONS THAT IDF CHIEF OF STAFF GUR STRONGLY DISAGREES WITH BEGIN'S MIDEAST POLICY. A SENIOR IDF SOURCE TOLD OUR TEL AVIV DEFENSE ATTACHE THAT GUR DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENT ISRAELI LEADERS KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING. IN GUR'S VIEW, THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE POSSIBLE "COSTLY" RESULTS OF THEIR POLICY. BEGIN'S MEETINGS WITH SECRETARY VANCE WERE A FAILURE, GUR STATED. OUR ATTACHE OBSERVED THAT THIS IS THE SECOND RECENT REPORT THAT GUR OPPOSES BEGIN'S POLICIES. MOREOVER, THIS IS NOT HIS ONLY AREA OF DISAGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT; GUR HAS PUBLICLY CLASHED WITH DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMANN OVER CUTS IN THE IDF'S BUDGET. (CONFIDENTIAL/NOFORN)

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7. PALESTINIANS. PLO POLITICAL CHIEF QADDUMI, IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED YESTERDAY IN BEIRUT'S WEEKLY "MONDAY MORNING," SAID THAT THE PLO EXPECTS A DRAFT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING "PALESTINIAN NATIONAL RIGHTS" TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL DURING ITS FALL SESSION. THE NEW RESOLUTION--POSSIBLY TO BE SUBMITTED BY "A NUMBER OF FRIENDLY COUNTRIES"--WOULD SUCCEED RESOLUTION 242, QADDUMI ASSERTED. EVEN IF SUCH A RESOLUTION WERE PASSED, HOWEVER, THE PLO WOULD NOT RECOGNIZE ISRAEL, SINCE SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE AN UNACCEPTABLE CONCESSION. QADDUMI ALSO OPINED THAT A GENEVA CONFERENCE WAS IMPROBABLE THIS YEAR DUE TO US-ISRAELI "MANEUVERS."

8. THE DAY BEFORE QADDUMI'S INTERVIEW, THE EGYPTIAN-PALESTINIAN "COORDINATION COMMITTEE"--LED BY FAHMY AND QADDUMI--MET AGAIN IN CAIRO. QADDUMI REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE PLO WELCOMES A DIALOGUE WITH THE US, SAYING THE PLO HAD "NO PRECONDITIONS." THE PLO POLITICAL CHIEF ALSO REITERATED THAT THE PLO STOOD BY ITS COMMITMENT TO THE PNC'S STATEMENT ON RESOLUTION 242, ADDING THAT THE PLO WAS SEEKING A "NEW RESOLUTION" FROM THE SECURITY COUNCIL WHICH WOULD AFFIRM THE PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO AN INDEPENDENT STATE.

9. IN THE ASSESSMENT OF OUR CONSULATE GENERAL IN JERUSALEM, THE WEST BANK "POSITION PAPER" PASSED TO THE SECRETARY REPRESENTS A HARDLINE POSITION ON THE WEST BANKERS' PART:

(A) DESPITE AN EFFORT BY SOME MAYORS, THE PRE-1967 BORDERS ARE NOT DEFINED AS THE LIMIT OF WEST BANK CLAIMS AND NO DISTINCTION IS MADE BETWEEN PALESTINIAN LANDS
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IN ISRAEL AND THE WEST BANK.

(B) NO REFERENCE IS MADE TO UN RESOLUTION 242 (ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT SPECIFICALLY REJECTED)

(C) SUPPORT FOR THE PLO IS FIRM AND ALL-INCLUSIVE.

THE CONSULATE GENERAL NOTED THAT THIS IS APPARENTLY THE FIRST STATEMENT DIRECTED AS WELL TO THE SOVIETS, A PROBABLE REFLECTION OF THE INFLUENCE OF WEST BANK LEFTISTS WHO FEEL THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD PLAY A LARGER ROLE IN THE PEACE PROCESS. (CONFIDENTIAL)

10. LEBANON. ARTILLERY FIRE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WAS PARTICULARLY HEAVY OVER THE WEEKEND. A COMMUNIQUE FROM THE PLO MILITARY COMMAND REPORTED HEAVY SHELLING AROUND THE VILLAGE OF YARIN. ISRAELI ARTILLERY WAS ACTIVE IN THE MARJAYOUN SALIENT AS WELL AS IN THE YARIN AREA. THE CLASHES NEAR YARIN WERE ALSO MARKED BY THE ADVANCE OF A SMALL CHRISTIAN FORCE TOWARD THE PALESTINIAN STRONGHOLD. WE BELIEVE PLO REPORTS OF AN ISRAELI ADVANCE WERE IN FACT REFERRING TO THESE CHRISTIANS THE ISRAELIS DENY ANY ACTION ON THEIR PART.

11. WITH REGARD TO THE DEPLOYMENT OF LEBANESE ARMY UNITS TO SOUTHERN LEBANON, ARMY COMMANDER VICTOR KHOURY TOLD OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE THAT PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE. KHOURY SAID THAT HE HAD RECEIVED SARKIS' CONCURRENCE THAT THE ARMY SHOULD NOT BE DEPLOYED BEFORE A CEASEFIRE HAD TAKEN EFFECT AND THE PALESTINIANS HAD WITHDRAWN. IF ALL THE PARTIES COOPERATED, HE THOUGHT THE HE COULD DEPLOY HIS FORCES WITHIN 15 DAYS. OFFICERS HAD ALREADY BEEN SENT SOUTH TO ASSEMBLE FORMER SOLDIERS IN LEBANESE BARRACKS IN THE AREA.

12. LEFTIST AND PALESTINIAN FORCES IN SOUTHERN
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LEBANON CLAIMED YESTERDAY THAT ISRAEL HAS INCREASED ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THE AREA. THEY ALLEGE THAT THE ISRAELIS BEGAN USING TANKS LAST WEEK TO ASSIST RIGHTIST GUNNERS. EVERY NIGHT THE ISRAELIS REPORTEDLY MOVE TANKS INTO CHRISTIAN VILLAGES TO INCREASE CHRISTIAN FIRE POWER.

13. IN HIS RECENT MEETINGS WITH LEBANESE CHRISTIAN LEADERS, SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD ASKED THEM TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE RELAXATION OF THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. ASSAD STRESSED THAT HE WAS DETERMINED TO IMPLEMENT THE SHTAWRAH AGREEMENT IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. A REGULAR LEBANESE ARMY FORCE WILL REPORTEDLY MOVE TO NABATIYA TODAY.(CONFIDENTIAL)

14. IRAQ. OUR BAGHDAD INTERESTS SECTION REPORTED THAT THE JORDANIANS AND IRAQIS HAVE SIGNED AN AGREEMENT PROVIDING FOR A "FREE ZONE" FOR IRAQI GOODS AT THE PORT OF AQABA. THE ZONE WILL HAVE FACILITIES FOR THE STORAGE OF IRAQI EXPORTS AND IMPORTS. THE INTERESTS SECTION OBSERVED THAT THIS AGREEMENT IS IN KEEPING WITH THE IRAQIS' DESIRE TO DIVERSIFY ITS CHANNELS FOR FOREIGN TRADE AND THAT IT REFLECTS THE APPARENT IRAQI BELIEF THAT ENHANCED TRADE TIES WITH JORDAN MAY BE ONE COUNTER TO SYRIAN INFLUENCE IN AMMAN. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) VANCE

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